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JGJR.: 06-06

Paper No: ____

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JUN 19 2006

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of	:	
Egger	:	DECISION
Application No.: 09/854,577	:	
Filing Date: 15 May, 2001	:	
Attorney Docket No. 4256B	:	

This is a decision on the petition filed on 17 April, 2006, to revive the instant application under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) as having as abandoned due to unintentional delay.

Petitioner has filed a Notice of Change of Address, which is not a Revocation/Power of Attorney, and—thus—has not as of this writing been honored because it is not an appropriate filing in the absence of a Revocation/Power of Attorney. And, while, the documentation filed in connection with the instant petition may suggest an intent to revoke authority to previously designated Counsel, no action can be taken in that regard in the absence of express instruction to the Office by the Applicant.

Thus, there is no indication that Petitioner herein was ever empowered to prosecute the instant application. If Petitioner desires to receive future correspondence regarding this application, the appropriate power of attorney documentation must be submitted. A courtesy copy of this decision will be mailed to Petitioner. However, all future correspondence will be directed to the address of record until such time as appropriate instructions are received to the contrary.

For the reasons set forth below the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **DISMISSED.**

NOTES:

- (1) Any petition (and fee) for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within two (2) months from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled “Renewed Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).”
- (2) Thereafter, there will be no further reconsideration of this matter.

BACKGROUND

The record reflects that:

- Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the final Office action mailed on 30 March, 2004, with reply due absent extension of time on or before 30 June, 2004;
- the application went abandoned by operation of law after midnight 30 June, 2004;
- the Office action was returned as undelivered on 9 July, 2004;
- Counsel filed a Notice of Change of Address on 7 October, 2004;
- the Office mailed the Notice of Abandonment on 28 March, 2005;
- with the instant petition (with fee), Petitioner (Stephen R. Whitt (Reg. No, 34,735))—who is not Counsel of Record has:

—submitted no Revocation/Power of Attorney) but nonetheless has attempted to change the mailing address without the appropriately demonstrated authority;

—filed a statement that the application was being revived for co-pendency with a concurrently filed divisional (as the reply) and then being expressly abandoned, but provides no copy or other evidence thereof (while Office records may suggest at this writing a parent/child relationship with another application, in the absence of the pendency of the instant matter, as a matter of law no relationship exists;

—argues without expressly demonstrating deception by Counsel and

cites *Lonardo*¹ in connection therewith;

–submits a statement by a co-inventor, who alleges but does not evidence the holding of the entire interest (and no assignments are of record), makes allegations as to Counsel (but evidences no effort to address the matter with the Office of Enrollment and Discipline (OED)), and alleges unintentional delay, but, as indicated above, such allegations remain unsupported in the record;

- thus, the delays between the abandonment and subsequent notice thereof of the instant application were nearly twenty-two (22) months and thirteen (13) months, respectively, nonetheless, while Petitioner is willing to suggest inappropriate action by Counsel, no such representation has been made to OED, and—in its absence—no statement is submitted by Petitioner from Counsel.

As of this writing, Petitioner has failed to submit, *inter alia*: a statement of Counsel at the time the application went abandoned; adequate evidence of interest and intent of the co-inventors and/or an appropriate assignment made in advance of the abandonment with evidence of the intent of the assignee; evidence of a proper reply; a proper revocation/power of attorney.

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).²

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority. The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.³

¹ When an attorney intentionally conceals a mistake he has made, thus depriving the client of a viable opportunity to cure the consequences of the attorney's error, the situation is not governed by the stated rule in Link for charging the attorney's mistake to his client. In re Lonardo, 17 USPQ2d 1455 (Comm'r. Pat. 1990).

² 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:
35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.
 Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

³ Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.

Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.⁴ Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).⁵ And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.⁶ Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care.

(By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁷))

More than 35 years ago the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals warned practitioners in Lorenz v. Finkl⁸ that "ordinary prudence" demands that they take "appropriate action" as directed by the Office, and practitioners disregard this warning at peril to their client's matters. (Moreover, as long as the attorney/agent has not acted to deceive the client,⁹ the act(s) or omissions of the attorney/agent are imputed wholly to the applicant/client who hired the attorney/agent.¹⁰

Moreover, Petitioners always are reminded of the burden of those registered to practice *and* all others who make representations before the Office, *inter alia*, to inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office.¹¹

⁴ See: Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

⁵ See: In re Application of G, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

⁶ See: Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office *supra*.

⁷ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

⁸ Lorenz v. Finkl, 142 USPQ 26, 27-28 (CCPA 1964).

⁹ When an attorney intentionally conceals a mistake he has made, thus depriving the client of a viable opportunity to cure the consequences of the attorney's error, the situation is not governed by the stated rule in Link for charging the attorney's mistake to his client. In re Lonardo, 17 USPQ2d 1455 (Comm'r. Pat. 1990).

¹⁰ The actions or inactions of the attorney/agent must be imputed to the petitioners, who hired the attorney/agent to represent them. Link v. Wabash Railroad Co., 370 U.S. 626, 633-634, 82 S.Ct. 1386, 1390-91 (1962). The failure of a party's attorney to take a required action or to notify the party of its rights does not create an extraordinary situation. Moreover, the neglect of a party's attorney is imputed to that party and the party is bound by the consequences. See Huston v. Ladner, 973 F.2d 1564, 23 USPQ2d 1910 (Fed Cir. 1992); Herman Rosenberg and Parker-Kalon Corp. v. Carr Fastener Co., 10 USPQ 106 (2d Cir. 1931).

¹¹ See supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on petitioner's duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

Specifically, the regulations at 37 C.F.R. §10.18 provide:

Allegations as to
Unintentional Delay

The requirements for a grantable petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee, a statement/showing of unintentional delay, a proper reply, and—where appropriate—a terminal disclaimer and fee if the application was filed before 8 June, 1995.

It appears as of this writing that Petitioner has yet to satisfy the “reply” and “statement/showing” requirements under the regulation. (Petitioner may review the commentary set forth at MPEP §711.03(c) and the language at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) for guidance.) Petitioner also should review the discussion in the BACKGROUND, above, before submitting any reply.

CONCLUSION

The petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **dismissed**.

§ 10.18 Signature and certificate for correspondence filed in the Patent and Trademark Office.

(a) For all documents filed in the Office in patent, trademark, and other non-patent matters, except for correspondence that is required to be signed by the applicant or party, each piece of correspondence filed by a practitioner in the Patent and Trademark Office must bear a signature by such practitioner complying with the provisions of §1.4(d), §1.4(e), or § 2.193(c)(1) of this chapter.

(b) By presenting to the Office (whether by signing, filing, submitting, or later advocating) any paper, the party presenting such paper, whether a practitioner or non-practitioner, is certifying that—

(1) All statements made therein of the party's own knowledge are true, all statements made therein on information and belief are believed to be true, and all statements made therein are made with the knowledge that whoever, in any matter within the jurisdiction of the Patent and Trademark Office, knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals, or covers up by any trick, scheme, or device a material fact, or makes any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations, or makes or uses any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any false, fictitious or fraudulent statement or entry, shall be subject to the penalties set forth under 18 U.S.C. 1001, and that violations of this paragraph may jeopardize the validity of the application or document, or the validity or enforceability of any patent, trademark registration, or certificate resulting therefrom; and

(2) To the best of the party's knowledge, information and belief, formed after an inquiry reasonable under the circumstances, that —

(i) The paper is not being presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass someone or to cause unnecessary delay or needless increase in the cost of prosecution before the Office;

(ii) The claims and other legal contentions therein are warranted by existing law or by a nonfrivolous argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing law or the establishment of new law;

(iii) The allegations and other factual contentions have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, are likely to have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for further investigation or discovery; and

(iv) The denials of factual contentions are warranted on the evidence, or if specifically so identified, are reasonably based on a lack of information or belief.

(c) Violations of paragraph (b)(1) of this section by a practitioner or non-practitioner may jeopardize the validity of the application or document, or the validity or enforceability of any patent, trademark registration, or certificate resulting therefrom. Violations of any of paragraphs (b)(2)(i) through (iv) of this section are, after notice and reasonable opportunity to respond, subject to such sanctions as deemed appropriate by the Commissioner, or the Commissioner's designee, which may include, but are not limited to, any combination of —

(1) Holding certain facts to have been established;

(2) Returning papers;

(3) Precluding a party from filing a paper, or presenting or contesting an issue;

(4) Imposing a monetary sanction;

(5) Requiring a terminal disclaimer for the period of the delay; or

(6) Terminating the proceedings in the Patent and Trademark Office.

(d) Any practitioner violating the provisions of this section may also be subject to disciplinary action. See § 10.23(c)(15).

[Added 50 FR 5175, Feb. 6, 1985, effective Mar. 8, 1985; para. (a) revised, 58 FR 54494, Oct. 22, 1993, effective Nov. 22, 1993; paras. (a) & (b) revised, paras. (c) & (d) added, 62 FR 53131, Oct. 10, 1997, effective Dec. 1, 1997; para. (a) revised, 69 FR 56481, Sept. 21, 2004, effective Oct. 21, 2004]

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:¹²

By mail: Commissioner for Patents¹³
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By FAX: IFW Formal Filings
(571) 273-8300
ATTN.: Office of Petitions

By hand: Mail Stop: Petition
Customer Service Window
Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214.



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¹² On July 15, 2005, the Central Facsimile (FAX) Number changed to (571) 273-8300. The number (571) 273-8300 is be the only facsimile number recognized for centralized delivery. (For further information. see: <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/dapp/opla/preognotice/cfax062005.pdf>.)

¹³ To determine the appropriate addresses for other subject-specific correspondence, refer to the USPTO Web site at www.uspto.gov.